

related information may be acquired over the interface of the second network technology, e.g. by the first providing means.

[0091] The first providing means may provide a part of signaling traffic received from the mobility management entity with the first selection request via the interface of the second network technology.

[0092] The apparatus may comprise generating means for generating a response to the first selection request, including an indication of the distributed gateway device, and second providing means for providing the response via the interface of the first network technology.

[0093] The interface of the first network technology may comprise an S11 interface, the interface of the second network technology may comprise a general packet radio service tunneling protocol, an open flow protocol or a combination thereof, the first protocol may comprise a general packet radio system protocol, and the second protocol may comprise an internet protocol.

[0094] The detecting means, the selecting means, the first and second providing means, the acquiring means and the generating means may be implemented by the processing resources **11**, the memory resources **12** and the interfaces **13** of the control unit **10**.

[0095] According to an embodiment of the invention, a gateway control apparatus of a mobile communications network system, which is a termination point of signaling messages according to a first protocol, detects a first selection request via an interface of a first network technology from a mobility management entity, of selecting the gateway control apparatus for communicating user data in the mobile communications network system between an entity of the first protocol and a network of a second protocol. Based on the detected first selection request, the gateway control apparatus selects a distributed gateway device from plural distributed gateway devices for communicating the user data, and provides a second selection request of selecting the distributed gateway device via an interface of a second network technology independent from the first network technology.

[0096] It is to be understood that the above description is illustrative of the invention and is not to be construed as limiting the invention. Various modifications and applications may occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

1. A method for use by a gateway control apparatus of a mobile communications network system, the gateway control apparatus being a termination point of signaling messages according to a first protocol, the method comprising:

detecting a first selection request via an interface of a first network technology from a mobility management entity, of selecting the gateway control apparatus for communicating user data in the mobile communications network system between an entity of the first protocol and a network of a second protocol;

based on the detected first selection request, selecting a distributed gateway device from plural distributed gateway devices for communicating the user data; and

providing a second selection request of selecting the distributed gateway device via an interface of a second network technology independent from the first network technology.

2. The method of claim **1**, comprising:

acquiring transport network related information; and selecting the distributed gateway device based on the transport network related information.

3. The method of claim **2**, wherein the transport network related information comprises load status of links or nodes and/or routing/transport costs of different paths, and/or the transport network related information is acquired over the interface of the second network technology.

4. The method of claim **1**, comprising:

providing a part of signaling traffic received from the mobility management entity with the first selection request via the interface of the second network technology.

5. The method of claim **1**, comprising:

generating a response to the first selection request, including an indication of the distributed gateway device; and providing the response via the interface of the first network technology.

6. The method of claim **1**, wherein

the interface of the first network technology comprises an interface, and/or

the interface of the second network technology comprises a general packet radio service tunneling protocol, an open flow protocol or a combination thereof, and/or the first protocol comprises a general packet radio system protocol, and/or the

second protocol comprises an internet protocol.

7. A computer program product including a program for a processing device, comprising software code portions for performing the steps of claim **1** when the program is run on the processing device.

8. The computer program product according to claim **7**, wherein the computer program product comprises a computer-readable medium on which the software code portions are stored.

9. The computer program product according to claim **7**, wherein the program is directly loadable into an internal memory of the processing device.

10. An apparatus of a mobile communications network system, the apparatus being a termination point of signaling messages according to a first protocol, the apparatus being configured to:

detect a first selection request via an interface of a first network technology from a mobility management entity, of selecting the apparatus for communicating user data in the mobile communications network system between an entity of the first protocol and a network of a second protocol;

based on the detected first selection request, select a distributed gateway device from plural distributed gateway devices for communicating the user data; and

provide a second selection request of selecting the distributed gateway device via an interface of a second network technology independent from the first network technology.

11. The apparatus of claim **10**, configured to:

acquire transport network related information; and select the distributed gateway device based on the transport network related information.

12. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein the transport network related information comprises load status of links or nodes and/or routing/transport costs of different paths, and/or